United Nations A/50/PV.114

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

114th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 24 April 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 44 (*continued*)

The situation in the Middle East

Mr. Poernomo (Indonesia): For nearly two weeks the international community has witnessed the combined land, sea and air attacks by the armed forces of Israel against Lebanon, a founding Member of the United Nations. We have seen loss of life and serious injuries sustained by innocent men, women and children. Fijian officers serving with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) have suffered serious injuries as a result of Israeli shelling. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been displaced. Lebanon's infrastructure has been destroyed.

For nearly two weeks we have also witnessed Lebanon's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty violated and Security Council resolutions flouted with impunity by Israel. With these latest military actions, the hopes engendered by the recent progress of the Madrid peace process risk being extinguished.

This situation must not be allowed to continue.

The Security Council has taken an important step in the right direction. As a member of the Council, Indonesia has been consistent in calling for a halt to hostilities in Lebanon and for full respect for the Council's resolution 425 (1978). Indonesia thus joined the consensus within the Council in adopting resolution 1052 (1996) on 18 April 1996. We should like to take this occasion to reaffirm our full support for the provisions contained therein, including the call for an immediate cessation of hostilities by all parties and the unequivocal reaffirmation of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries.

At the same time, we are all reminded of Israel's wilful failure to comply with the resolutions of the Security Council. Resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) remain unimplemented, despite repeated appeals by the international community. In Lebanon today we are again witnessing Israel's defiance of Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1052 (1996).

It is against such a backdrop that the Indonesian delegation fully supports convening this resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly to consider the grave situation in Lebanon.

We listened attentively to the address by His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of the Lebanese Republic, who gave a poignant account of the terrible suffering of his people. In this context, the Assembly's consideration of the situation in Lebanon is indeed fully consistent with its broader responsibilities under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is also reflective of the recognition of the need for enhanced cooperation and interaction between

96-85544 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

the Assembly and the Security Council, as the two preeminent political organs of the United Nations in dealing with issues that impinge upon the interests of all Member States.

Through its current operation Israel has demonstrated once again its utter contempt for Security Council resolution 425 (1978), as well the Charter provisions and principles of international law governing relations between States.

My delegation regards this military action, which has brought about scores of casualties among the civilian population, particularly among women and children, as unconscionable. Moreover, the massive exodus of people which has taken place threatens not only the stability of Lebanon, but also peace and security in the region.

It is quite clear to my delegation where the responsibility rests for an immediate end to the hostilities. We therefore call upon Israel to cease forthwith its military action against Lebanon and to withdraw its forces. It is my delegation's hope that our deliberations today, as well as the current intensive rounds of diplomatic efforts, will help bring about such an outcome, for the vicious cycle of violence and bloodshed which has bedeviled the Middle East must be broken and a comprehensive and just peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) must be realized.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The convening of this emergency session of the General Assembly to consider the grave developments in Lebanon is in itself an expression of the grave concern of the whole world over the war which has been raging for almost two weeks.

The Lebanese people, represented by His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of Lebanon, have come to us, beseeching the world's conscience for redress and for a cessation of the aggression that has been inflicted upon them.

The Israeli military operations — by land, sea and air — have continued unabated against most of Lebanon's territory, leaving behind hundreds of dead and wounded, mostly unarmed, innocent civilians, in addition to the hundreds of thousands of those who have been displaced from their villages and towns.

The whole world has witnessed this horror being inflicted upon the women, children and elderly in their shelters. We have witnessed death chasing them even in the safe haven of the United Nations.

The tragedy at the village of Qana last Thursday stands out: the blood of the Lebanese people and of the international peacekeepers has been mixed. This tragedy is evidence of the savagery of these attacks, which have aroused deep indignation in world opinion.

Among the objectives of these operations was the destruction of Lebanon's infrastructure, the foundation of its economic life, and the basis of the strenuous reconstruction efforts made by Lebanon after years of a destructive civil war. In this task, Lebanon counted on the sweat and sacrifices of its children in order to regain its previous prosperity, a prosperity achieved through the spirit of initiative inherent in the Lebanese people. Lebanon also embarked on this reconstruction in order to regain its position as a centre of banking and economic activity, as an arena for exchanges between the States of the region and as a beacon of science and knowledge.

The Security Council adopted resolution 1052 (1996) calling for a cessation of hostility. Yet every day continues to bring painful humanitarian tragedies to the Lebanese people without Israel responding to the call for a cease-fire and agreement on the implementation of resolution 425 (1978), which would ensure its withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

We denounce the Israeli aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. We denounce the collective punishment represented by the comprehensive blockade of the greater part of Lebanon, as is the case with the occupied Palestinian territories. This collective punishment also takes the form of the demolition of houses, public facilities, ports and power stations. We had thought that all these practices had ended now that the region has entered a new era following the Madrid conference, an era which was supposed to represent the dividing line between the logic of war and that of peace.

Experience has shown the inability of force to impose solutions. It has shown the danger of collective punishments, which feed the spiral of violence and terrorism in all its manifestations. A return to these erroneous policies, whatever its justification, would take us back to that vicious cycle that results only in sowing the seeds of hatred, bitterness and the desire for vengeance.

Tunisia and its President have repeatedly reaffirmed the urgent need for the peace process to succeed, as the only way to stop the bloodshed and the cycle of violence. This success would ensure the safety and security of each and every State within its borders. It would enable all the States of the region to concentrate on the development and construction struggle.

With these goals in mind, and being attached to the principles of peace, justice and international law, Tunisia has supported the peace process since its beginning at Madrid, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978) and the principle of land for peace.

From the same perspective, Tunisia has continued to draw attention to the need to protect the peace process and to safeguard it against any setbacks. Tunisia has also pointed out the need for cooperation between all those of goodwill within and outside the region in order to advance the peace process to its desired objectives on all its different tracks: the Palestinian, the Syrian and the Lebanese alike. This would ensure Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds, southern Lebanon and the Syrian Golan, thus achieving just and comprehensive peace.

In the tragic circumstances in which sisterly Lebanon lives, we express our full solidarity to its President, its Government and its people. We call upon all those involved in international affairs to use their influence to put an end to the Israeli military actions forthwith and to pursue the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), thus putting an end to the occupation of southern Lebanon and ending all the causes of the violence.

The General Assembly has followed the question of the Middle East in all its aspects since the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has contributed effectively to the expression of the legal and political basis of the peace process in the Middle East. Today it is called upon to support Lebanon and its people; to stand by its side in order to end the injustice inflicted upon it; to put an end to its tragedy; to stop the aggression against it; and to compensate it for its massive losses.

The international community must reaffirm strongly the need for respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon. It is called upon to provide economic, financial and humanitarian assistance in order to enable Lebanon to reconstruct what was destroyed by the war and to face the tragic situation in which its people currently live.

Lebanon gave humanity the alphabet; it has contributed to the development of human civilization throughout all the stages of its history. Until the recent past it was an oasis of peace, coexistence and creative thought. We are all indebted to Lebanon; we must repay our debt, recognizing its great contributions.

Tunisia, which has brotherly ties to Lebanon dating from the dawn of history, ties which strengthen daily, hopes that the appeal of Tyre and the surrounding areas, which contributed to the establishment of Carthage and the propagation of the principle of freedom and honest, peaceful competition in the Mediterranean, will reverberate in the Assembly; we hope that the Assembly will support Tyre and end the aggression against it, enabling it once again to assume its historical role.

In this regard, we renounce the indiscriminate bombardment of the historical monuments in Tyre, which are considered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to be part of the heritage of mankind. This aggression is a breech of international law and of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

The salvation of the Middle East and the end of its tragedies depend upon the renunciation of the logic of war and on the continuation of the peace process, on the basis of mutual trust, goodwill and compliance with commitments. This would achieve a just, lasting and durable peace ensuring security and stability for all.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): We are here in this resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly in order to combat the Israeli aggression against Lebanon. This is appropriate, given the grave threat this presents to the peace and security of the Middle East.

An address was given to the General Assembly yesterday afternoon by the President of Lebanon, who gave an exhaustive, objective statement on the consequences to Lebanon's people, its economy, its security and its stability. This is evidence of the seriousness of this aggression and of the scope of its consequences. It is therefore crucially important that the aggression be ended immediately and that the necessary legal and political arrangements be adopted in order to

eliminate its causes and, primarily, end Israel's persistent occupation of southern Lebanon and its interference in its internal affairs.

This aggression, which has been going of for two weeks, has caused hundreds of deaths and injured and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. The Lebanese people emerged from a deadly civil war with the wisdom of its strength and its youth to use its energy for the development and reconstruction of the nation. It is our hope that prosperity will come to Lebanon.

The Government of Lebanon has joined in this effort, convinced of the value of the peace process, in order to bring about stability and security in its bloodied homeland. However, Israel has continued its methods, which have shown themselves to be a failure and to have disastrous consequences. These methods know only the logic of brute force, repression and massive reprisals as a means of imposing security in part of its land, while ignoring the rights and security of others in their own territory.

For almost 14 days Israel has continued to bombard civilian installations in Lebanon, causing the death of more than 200 people and the displacement of over 300,000 others. The Israeli army has been brutally bombarding Lebanese installations and has trampled upon all the rules and principles of the international community. International practice demands that it spare civilian installations from deadly attacks.

Israel has launched attacks from the air, land and sea against Lebanon. The brutality of these bombardments reached their height when Israel imposed a sea blockade against Lebanon. The Israeli navy is bombarding coastal villages in Lebanon, causing the complete destruction of civilian installations and, in particular, of historic sites on the southern Lebanese coast. Furthermore, the Israeli navy has been attacking ships bringing foodstuffs, commodities and other basic needs for the people of southern Lebanon and has cut off and isolated the coastal road between the south and the rest of the country.

We must now ask the following questions. What is the relationship between Israeli security and Lebanese power plants, which were destroyed by the Israeli army during its military operations? What is the value in terms of security of having the Israeli army demolish the homes of civilians in the south? What is the value in terms of security of Israel's attacking archaeological and historical sites on the Lebanese coast? The answer to all these questions confirms that Israel hates that people and wants to take vengeance for what the country has done during a limited period in its history. It also confirms that Israel defies the decisions and resolutions of the Security Council and of international public opinion.

Kuwait feels that the massacre at the United Nations forces' base on Thursday, 18 April, which caused the death of more than a hundred Lebanese citizens, including children, old people and women who had taken refuge in a building bombarded by Israel, testifies to the fact that Israel does not respect the simplest rules of morality, which others recognize, regarding the protection of unarmed, innocent civilians.

Last week, during the Security Council meeting held to consider the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, my delegation clearly condemned that aggression. The Council of Ministers of Kuwait has expressly condemned it and expressed its support for the people and Government of Lebanon. My delegation would like to reaffirm that these Israeli military operations, carried out against civilian targets in Lebanon, are contrary to all humanitarian principles and values, and are a flagrant violation of the rules of international law, the principles of the Charter, and the armistice agreement concluded between Israel and Lebanon in 1949. Kuwait asks Israel to apply the relevant resolutions of the Security Council — in particular, resolution 425 (1978), which calls upon Israel to immediately cease all military operations against Lebanese territory and to withdraw all its military forces from the occupied territories in Lebanon. It also demands that the international community continue to put pressure on Israel to prompt it to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Lebanon.

Alas, the clear condemnation by the international community of Israel's military operations against Lebanon, condemnation expressed in the Security Council on behalf of various regional groups, has had no effect on Israeli behaviour. The same is true of Security Council resolution 1052 (1996), adopted unanimously by the Council last week, which calls for the cessation of military operations, given the loss of human lives and property. The international community has witnessed a series of aggressive acts against Lebanese sovereignty, in spite of the adoption of that resolution and in spite of the repeated appeals by the international community that military operations cease as quickly as possible. All the victims, all the deaths, all the displaced among the Lebanese people, over and above the destruction of the

country's infrastructure, result from a kind of State terrorism, the most serious form of terrorism.

Indeed, my delegation feels that there are several forms of terrorism; the recent Israeli aggression against Lebanon is a form of terrorism suffered by small, peaceful States. Kuwait vigorously condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It condemns and rejects Israeli practices and the unreasonable reaction of the Israelis, which included the excessive use of military force. Such practices strengthen feelings of hatred and vengeance among many people in the region.

Kuwait therefore feels that peace cannot be achieved in Lebanon and the region unless Israel takes the following measures.

First, Israel should immediately cease its military operations against Lebanon and should commit itself not to carry out any further aggression against Lebanese territory.

Secondly, Israel should immediately and unconditionally withdraw from Lebanese territory, in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

Thirdly, Israel should support and pursue the peace process in the Middle East in order to reach a global, just and lasting peace in all areas, and in particular in Syria and in Lebanon. It should implement the relevant international resolutions adopted at the Madrid peace conference and totally withdraw from all occupied Arab territories, including the Arab Syrian Golan, and should respect the principle of land for peace. Kuwait feels that no lasting peace can be achieved without agreement on the Syrian and Lebanese problems.

Fourthly, Israel must commit itself to compensating Lebanon for the material and human losses Lebanon has suffered as a result of the aggression. This should be done within the framework of international arrangements to be adopted in this respect.

Kuwait, which remembers the courageous and honourable positions and attitudes adopted by Lebanon during our ordeal when Iraq occupied Kuwait, reaffirms that it stands alongside Lebanon during its ordeal. Kuwait is proud of the resistance of the Lebanese people and their sacrifices to defend their sovereignty and independence.

His Highness the Emir of Kuwait, because of Kuwait's faith in the Lebanese people and its sympathy with the suffering of the Lebanese people, has given instructions for the sending of emergency humanitarian assistance to Lebanon to enable the Lebanese to overcome the consequences of the Israeli aggression against their territory. An air bridge has been established to deliver this assistance, which includes foodstuffs as well as a medical team and fully equipped ambulances. We appeal to the international community to participate immediately in saving the Lebanese people in their time of hardship so that they can overcome the consequences and devote their efforts to developing their homeland in security and stability.

In conclusion, I would like to recall that we are meeting today within the framework of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly during which the members of the United Nations have celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of an Organization set up to preserve peace and stability for all the peoples of the world. Alas, in meeting today to consider the question of a people's sovereignty and security, we are dealing with security that has been violated and a people that have been deprived of their dreams for the future.

Mr. Lamamra (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): The President of the Lebanese Republic came here to present from this rostrum the message of his people to the international community. He did so by highlighting all of the acts of Israeli aggression against the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, as well as the human losses and material destruction which this two-week-long aggression has caused.

Algeria deeply sympathizes with the Lebanese people and its leaders during this terrible trial. The date 22 April, which the Lebanese Government designated an official day of mourning, was one of intense feeling for the Algerian people, who observed it with reverence for the memory of the victims and with other forms of fraternal solidarity.

In its intervention in the Security Council on 15 April, the Algerian delegation deplored the fact that since the adoption of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which remains unimplemented, an unfortunate phenomenon has arisen — that of becoming inured to recurrent outbreaks of violence and the accompanying upheavals for the civilian population, before warning:

> "recent events in Lebanon are of such magnitude and scope that a reaction by the international community is urgently needed to avoid a double

> catastrophe — humanitarian and political." *(S/PV.3653, p. 22)*

Such a response, unfortunately, did not come from the Security Council, and a catastrophe occurred when several dozen civilians, who had sought refuge under the United Nations flag, were massacred. This unspeakable act, which stunned the world's conscience, had the disturbing characteristics of a reckless gamble, a headlong rush, and appeals for restraint and appeals to reason can have no effect on those concerned.

Furthermore, even after the Security Council, after laborious negotiations, had called for an immediate end to hostilities, the bombardments continued, and even intensified, adding to the human cost of raids which only undermine the prospects for a just and lasting peace in the region.

Leaving international problems unresolved for too long produces effects which add to the inherent seriousness of the problems and set back the prospects of peace. In this case, we see a full return to the illegal occupation by Israel of Lebanese territory from which the Council, in its resolution 425 (1978), had called upon it to withdraw unconditionally. This continued occupation creates instability and prevents Lebanon from extending its sovereign authority to all the country's territory. Therefore, it is high time for the solution contained in Security Council resolution 425 (1978) be implemented, binding everyone to make sincere efforts to promote undiminished regional security based on legality.

The United Nations Charter is a code of conduct which all Member States of the Organization are committed to respect. The cardinal principles of refraining from the threat or use of force and the pacific settlement of international disputes are binding on all, everywhere and under all circumstances. Mishandling situations in such a way as to imperil the institutions of the system of collective security could lead to a dangerous drift. Against this background, the Israeli aggression against Lebanon calls for vigorous condemnation by our Assembly, as well as for the adoption of the measures indicated by the President of the Lebanese Republic to eliminate the consequences of the outbreak of violence for which Israel is responsible.

By demanding renewed respect for the United Nations Charter and for international law, the General Assembly will increase the credibility of our Organization and promote the peace process in the Middle East by protecting it from the use of force and *faits accomplis*.

The President: I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed at 1 p.m. today.

It was so decided.

The President: I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate that have not yet inscribed their names on the list to do so as soon as possible.

Mr. Rodrígues Parrilla (Cuba) *(interpretation from Spanish):* Today Lebanon is united, united in the mourning of its people and in the questions asked by its children, as to why they are being so cruelly punished, which go unanswered.

The international community witnesses with sorrow this new aggression by Israel against the Lebanese people and is rightly gravely concerned over this threat, with unpredictable consequences, to the Middle East peace process.

It is because of all this that our General Assembly is meeting here today, following the loss of hundreds of civilian lives, the creation of hundreds of thousands of refugees, huge material losses and irreparable damage to archaeological and cultural sites, the common heritage of humanity.

The President of Lebanon, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, by his presence here and his address, has made a decisive contribution to our Assembly's work.

We are meeting today following 12 days of fierce military attacks by Israel, violation of the principles of international law, non-compliance with conventions on international humanitarian law and the disproportionate, unpunished, and unjustifiable use of military force. Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its internationally recognized borders have been gravely violated, and serious damage has been done to the efforts of the Lebanese people to rebuild their country. These tragic events, which have continued even since the silence that brought Beirut to a standstill in tribute to the dead, show the need to take effective international measures to stop this crime.

The General Assembly has met to make its decisive contribution, since the Security Council failed to do so, with a deplorable neglect of its duties. There is no time for procedural complications or long debates. Minute by

minute innocent people die, so every minute of inaction entails an enormous responsibility. Cuba hopes that the General Assembly will do justice to the Lebanese people; that it will strongly condemn the aggression by the Government of Israel and demand that it be ended. Cuba hopes that the General Assembly will be consistent with its own decisions and resolutions — in particular, those adopted on the situation in the Middle East and the peace process there, and with other relevant resolutions, especially Security Council resolution 425 (1978) — and demands their full implementation. Cuba also calls for respect for Lebanon's territorial integrity, sovereignty and internationally recognized borders. We call for compensation for all material losses and join the appeal to the United Nations and the international community to assist Lebanon in its national reconstruction efforts.

Cuba demands the return of all occupied Arab territories and supports the right of the Palestinian people to have a State of its own, with Jerusalem as its capital. Cuba calls for respect for the peace agreements, which the international community welcomed and which aroused great hopes. It calls for compliance with the Declaration of Principles and the continuation of negotiations on outstanding matters, including the question of Jerusalem. The peace process as a whole is jeopardized by these actions, which distance us from a just, lasting and comprehensive peace for all in the region.

Cuba, which for over 35 years has been and continues to be a victim of terrorist acts and aggression that have taken the lives of many of our people, condemns all acts of terrorism. But no national security reason, no reason of State, no pretext associated with international or regional peace and security, no terrorist act, can justify aggression, terrorism, the occupation of territories, the massacre of civilians and violations of the norms of international humanitarian law, or any unilateral measures such as the closure of borders, which silently kill children, women and the elderly.

The General Assembly is meeting in the natural exercise of the authority conferred upon it by the United Nations Charter, whose validity and usefulness are reaffirmed by the dramatic events that occur every day. We live in a world in which every year more human beings die because they lack any rights than died during the worst year of the Second World War, yet the United Nations has been able to do very little to guarantee millions of hungry, sick and illiterate people the right to life, health and education, and to ensure that the great majority of our nations have the right to development. No political manipulation of human rights can conceal these realities.

But if this argument is not considered sufficient to prove that the world remains as unjust, unequal and dangerous as it was some years ago, it suffices to look at the conflicts which, with their profound causes that no one can resolve and their tragic consequences that cannot be prevented or avoided, fill the newspapers every day. In essence, every day there is evidence of the inability of the United Nations to remove the causes of those conflicts and the inability of international mechanisms to build peace. Where is the new philosophy of this era? What actions have accompanied the rhetoric of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations? What is the final destination of the tons of documents that become confused with the *raison d'être* of the United Nations?

If anyone could have legitimate doubts as to the effectiveness of the Security Council in this most recent case and on the practical effects of the ambiguous, inadequate and weak language of the resolution adopted by the Council, as it was described by even some of the Council members in their explanations of vote, subsequent events have tragically removed all those doubts.

Today it can be said that the language of that resolution, far from being a deterrent, accentuated the climate of impunity; far from bringing us closer to peace, contributed to intensifying tension; far from bringing us closer to stated objectives, showed the United Nations as inactive and ineffective. It is regrettable that, as pointed out by many speakers in this debate, the predictable becomes obvious while the international community remains passive.

The causes are as well-known as they are difficult to resolve: double standards; lack of democracy, of public information and transparency; informal consultations and secret lobbying; the obsolete veto power; and the threat of the veto, which has become an even more dangerous and unacceptable instrument because the consequences of using it are not publicly assumed.

That is why this session of the General Assembly is so important. We attend knowing that it concerns a regular procedure and the use of powers that should be part of our daily lives. But it is important mainly for showing the resolve of the overwhelming majority of Member States to revitalize the General Assembly.

enhance its effectiveness and give its powers the prominence they deserve. This is the way to true strengthening of the United Nations, to making it serve the international community efficiently. This is the way of reform, which means developing the universal character of the United Nations and providing for the sovereign and equal participation of all States, large and small, rich and poor. This is the way towards being effective, which means finding practical, concrete solutions to the pressing problems of humankind. This is the way of modernity, which means finding new solutions to old and new problems.

We are pleased to see that a clear course of action is being established by the General Assembly in order to support the sovereign right of States, to ensure that the principles of the Charter are followed, to defend international peace and security, and to make the United Nations effective, even in spite of the failure of some of its organs. It is most important that, faced with events such as those that have occurred recently, the General Assembly should fully exercise its powers, using expeditious and simple procedures. This makes us hopeful that the Assembly will be able to do so as a permanent part of its daily work, not having to deal with tragic events such as these, but in a healthy and natural way playing its role as the universal, supreme and sovereign organ of the United Nations.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to welcome, on behalf of the delegation of Egypt, His Excellency President Elias Hraoui of Lebanon. Allow me also to reaffirm the solidarity of the Government and people of Egypt with Lebanon and our support for the strong and comprehensive statement made by the President at yesterday's meeting.

The delegation of Egypt expresses its solidarity with the statement made by the Chairman of the Arab Group. We subscribe to its support for, and solidarity with, sisterly Lebanon and its patient people, who have been subjected to vicious Israeli aggression since 10 April.

The international community, as represented by the United Nations, has long delayed, in an unjustified and unacceptable manner, dealing with the dangerous developments following Israel's attack by air, sea and land on Lebanon. In the same unjustified and unacceptable manner, the Security Council dragged its feet for too long before it convened last Thursday to adopt, after eight long days of Israeli aggression, a resolution that does not rise to the level of the explosive situation in Lebanon. The resolution does not reflect the grave threat to international and regional peace and security represented by that situation. Neither its drafting nor its content is commensurate with the gravity of the Israeli aggression and its serious consequences for the people of Lebanon, who have been subjected to killing and displacement, let alone with the destructive negative implications for Lebanon's infrastructure and for its Government's tenacious reconstruction efforts and ambitious reconstruction plans after long years of a destructive civil war.

In view of the situation, it is small wonder that the Israeli aggression should continue against Lebanon, so far without any regard to the resolutions of the Council, the established legal norms of international relations, the principles and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, or the destructive implications of this savage attack on the present and the future of peace in the Middle East.

Egypt, which initiated the peace process in the Middle East and which has led the call to turn over a new leaf in the region, to put an end to wars and fighting and to settle international disputes by peaceful means, cannot under any circumstances accept the use of force by Israel and its continued aggression against the people of Lebanon. The Charter of the United Nations has proscribed clearly and unambiguously the use of force in international relations. The Charter has determined the criteria under which States can resort to the legitimate right of self-defence. However much some might try to justify the Israeli military actions, these international criteria are not applicable to the repeated, massive attacks against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, nor against innocent unarmed civilians in Lebanon.

Suffice it to refer to what was said by His Excellency the President of Lebanon yesterday to refute any flimsy excuses that might be given to justify the Israeli aggression. He said:

> "as soon as Israel withdraws, the Lebanese State will guarantee security in this region". (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 113th meeting, p. 4*)

Lebanon resorted to the General Assembly, with the support of the Arab Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, after the Security Council, which bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of

international peace and security, chose not to discharge its responsibility in the required manner. The resolution adopted by the Council did not condemn Israel or its savage aggressions; it did not impose a forceful cease-fire; it did not call unambiguously and irrevocably for the full, unconditional implementation of resolution 425 (1978); nor did it deal in any way with the responsibility of the aggressor to compensate the victim of its aggression.

The Israeli aggression against Lebanon is a dangerous precedent that reminds us all of an era that we thought was over for ever. This dangerous precedent could pave the way for similar acts of aggression under one pretext or the other in any part of the world, so who will be the next victim?

The Council has let Lebanon down. Will the General Assembly now give it redress? Shall we all here face our responsibilities courageously, as Members of the United Nations? Shall we decide here with one voice, loudly and clearly, that the logic of the use of force in relations between States must be rejected, regardless of who the aggressor or the victim may be? Shall we do so without double standards, without bias, without discrimination and without favouritism?

Egypt supports all the bilateral and regional efforts made to stop the bloodshed in Lebanon. We support and participate in all these endeavours, yet at the same time we believe in the imperative need for the United Nations to discharge its basic responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is high time for the hellish, vicious circle of violence in the Middle East to be broken. It is time for all the parties concerned and for all those who take an interest in the peace process to make an additional and redoubled effort in that direction, an effort that should be guided by clear vision and a far-sighted strategic view that does not sacrifice peace for short-term interests motivated by electoral considerations here or there.

Silence in the face of the Israeli aggression, condoning it or collusion in it does not serve the cause of peace in the Middle East. Peace is not served by turning a blind eye to the humanitarian tragedy that the people of Lebanon, under fire by the Israeli war machine, have been experiencing. Peace is not served by looking the other way after the bombing of the historical sites in the city of Tyre, which are a common heritage of humankind. Peace is not served by looking the other way after the bombing last Thursday of a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) refugee camp. The Israeli forces shelled that area despite the fact that the Force had informed Israel that scores of civilians had taken refuge in the camp, which led to the killing of more than a hundred persons, including men, women and children.

The advocates of silence, condoning, collusion, turning a blind eye or looking the other way do not serve the cause of peace. They ignore the fact that peace is an indivisible whole; that not only is State terrorism no different from the terrorism of individuals, it is even more dangerous; and that oppression and humiliation beget extremism, that violence begets violence and that those who sow the seeds of violence reap only bitterness.

The General Assembly is called upon today to reaffirm Israel's responsibility for compensating Lebanon for the massive damage resulting from the Israeli aggression against Lebanese economic facilities. This aggression has set the reconstruction of Lebanon back many steps. The burden and responsibility for facing this setback must be shouldered by the international community and the United Nations system, and by all us as Members of the United Nations.

Donor countries and international financial institutions face a large, double responsibility *vis-à-vis* Lebanon. It is our hope that a clear message will be conveyed from this rostrum during this resumed session of the General Assembly — a message that reflects a high level of political commitment to supporting the efforts of sisterly Lebanon on the road to reconstruction.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm that an immediate cease-fire and an end to the bloodletting in Lebanon is our urgent demand. All peace-loving forces must strive to achieve this immediate objective, because peace in the Middle East is the ultimate goal and must never be lost in the din of military adventures.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Bangladesh was party to, and strongly supported, the request for the reopening of agenda item 44, with its focus on the Israeli attacks against Lebanon and their consequences.

The rationale for our support has sound justification. We have all heard the intensely moving statement of the President of the Lebanese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui. We cannot but join him in his sense of shock, horror, anguish and revulsion over the continuing destruction of his country; the mounting toll of dead and

wounded; and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians. Israeli warships, artillery, mortar and aerial attacks continue to decimate Lebanon's newly rebuilt infrastructure. Eighty per cent of the electrical supply has been destroyed by premeditated attacks on power stations. Residential areas and archaeological sites have been targeted, with callous disregard of consequences. The sea blockade compounds the hardships. Over a hundred Lebanese civilians were killed by the aerial bombardment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) compound at Qana. At the core of this situation of calculated reprisal and use of excessive force are complex political and electoral equations that touch on duplicity and double standards.

Everyone knows that the right of self-defence is not an unlimited right; the response is to be commensurate, even against a clear aggressor. Israel cannot vent its frustration on blameless Lebanon under such an elastic and all-encompassing umbrella. It creates an untenable precedent.

Eight days elapsed before the Security Council adopted unanimously resolution 1052 (1996). In essence, this called for a cease-fire; stressed the need for diplomatic negotiations to continue; reaffirmed commitment to the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon; called for respect for the safety and security of civilians; appealed for humanitarian assistance; and called for freedom of movement for UNIFIL and the fulfilment of its mandate.

Yet this much-needed Council action was too little, too late. The Council's credibility has been compromised. This was not only because of the omission of key elements, such as those highlighted in the draft resolution submitted by the 19 Arab States, but also because, after 12 days, the attacks continue, and violence has not ended. The Israeli operation "Grapes of Wrath", in the words of the Israeli Prime Minister, has no time-limit. Its objectives far exceed those mentioned in the debate preceding the Security Council's resolution and directly retards the progress of the peace process. In the eyes of the world, this brutal campaign, this gunboat diplomacy is indefensible. It has already backfired politically and militarily. It certainly deserves condemnation.

The urgent consideration of this item by the General Assembly is necessary. It reflects the conscience of the majority of the world's nations. It also calls for a more determined push to end hostilities; to redress the situation and compensate Lebanon for the destruction it has suffered; to push for massive humanitarian relief and longer-term reconstruction; and above all, to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries. This entails the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Lebanese territory.

Perhaps the most important element of this Assembly debate is to highlight the serious concern over the impact of Israeli aggression on the Middle East peace process, a process that all countries support. Israeli actions have certainly impeded progress. Bangladesh joins the Non-Aligned Movement and the OIC countries in emphasizing that peace cannot be imposed; it must evolve. Only a negotiated settlement for a comprehensive, just and durable solution of the Middle East problem can bring an end to violence and tension in the region.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Lebanese crisis is now in its second week, and there are no signs of a diminishing intensity in the military operations. Israeli officials state that the military actions will continue as long as necessary. However, while Israel's massive bombing has resulted in the loss of a few Hezbollah fighters, all the other victims have been peaceful citizens of Lebanon.

The shelling of Israel from Lebanese territory continues. Unfortunately, resolution 1052 (1996), which was adopted unanimously last week, has not yet been implemented. That resolution calls for an immediate end to hostilities and for respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon.

The crisis is very serious. It is impeding further steps to bring about a political settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Under these conditions, Russia, as a co-sponsor of the peace process in the Middle East, considers that consideration of the Lebanese question at this session of the General Assembly is justified and timely.

Massive military operations have led to numerous losses among the civilian population, destruction and the mass exodus of refugees. The tragedy reached its peak with the shelling of a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) battalion headquarters, which led to the death of more than a hundred peaceful citizens who had sought refuge there. The United Nations peace-keepers also suffered.

This incident needs careful further study. The President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Yeltsin, in his statement on 19 April on the events in Lebanon, said:

> "What took place in Lebanon was absolutely unacceptable. The Israeli military operation on Lebanese territory should be stopped immediately. We must put an end to the massive violation of the sovereignty of Lebanon, which has led to a total humanitarian disaster in that country. It goes without saying that it is necessary to ensure as well the end of the shelling of the northern regions of Israel."

In principle, this question has to be solved within the overall framework of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) on the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the so-called "security zone" and by ending the occupation of Lebanon. Only then will it be possible to shift full responsibility onto the Lebanese or the Syrian Government.

Striving to make a maximum attempt to help achieve a peaceful settlement, mainly through a rapid cease-fire, on the instruction of the President of Russia, the Foreign Minister of our country, Mr. Primakov, travelled to the countries in the region, visiting Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Negotiations took place with the leadership of those countries. Meetings were held with the Foreign Ministers of France and Italy, and contact was maintained with United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher. This confirms Russia's intention to do all it can to help find a way out of this crisis by relying on our many years of experience, our extensive ties in the region and on our capabilities.

The Russian Federation assumes that in the present situation, the main goal is to put an end to military actions, and it calls upon all he parties involved to show restraint. We are convinced that the vicious circle of confrontation can be broken only through political means. As a co-sponsor of the peace process, Russia is most insistent that Israel and Lebanon immediately reach a peace settlement on the basis of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon and for ensuring the security of both countries. That is the main condition for stabilizing the situation. We understand that implementing resolution 425 (1978) will involve a specific process, and it should be fully balanced.

One cannot create for one of the parties advantages intended, *inter alia*, to help that party solve some of its own political problems. The history of the Middle East conflict has shown that attempts to achieve peace and stability exclusively through military means lead nowhere. A continued reliance on force will inevitably lead to escalated violence, which could undermine the results of the many years of efforts made to achieve a peaceful settlement.

Russia's objective is not to seek political dividends but to establish peace and stability in the region. Russia has been, is, and will remain in the Middle East, where it will act to achieve these goals.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): It is impossible for people of goodwill who are deeply committed to the cause of peace in this world, and particularly in the Middle East, to find any reasonable explanation for the nature and level of the outrage that has been unleashed in Lebanon against unarmed civilian populations. We are witnessing massive bombardments of Lebanon far beyond the occupied so-called "security zone", deliberately targeting civilian facilities in and around that country's capital. In view of Israel's claim to be able to "surgically strike" any target it chooses, we can only surmise that the destruction of ambulances carrying civilians, of homes containing families, and of the main road out of the occupied zone for the surviving and desperate refugees, or relief supplies coming in, is to all intents and purposes deliberate.

But the destruction of the United Nations compound in Qana, filled as it was with refugees, must go down as one of the most heinous acts of this long and bitter conflict. There is no justification for directing over a dozen artillery shells into a United Nations "protected area" for some 12 to 15 minutes, despite an acknowledged official United Nations request to desist after it had begun. A shaken woman survivor moaned: "We came to the United Nations camp to protect ourselves, not to die". The world is understandably appalled at this wanton slaughter of some hundred civilians. That some would even hesitate to condemn this atrocity is equally perplexing.

Reports from the area of Israel's blitz over the length and breadth of Lebanon indicate that the Israelis are satisfied that Hezbollah, or at least someone, is being punished — hence the resort to massive air strikes, coastal bombardments and the deadly targeting of non-Hezbollah villages and people. The ghost towns, the dying, the homeless, the "killing fields" of Lebanon are taken in Israel as a justifiable price for all Arabs —

wherever they might be — to pay for Hezbollah's provocations.

But what is unknown at this moment is where these shells have indeed landed. Was it on Lebanon, or was it on the peace efforts in the Middle East, for which so many have valiantly worked, or on the forthcoming elections in Israel? No one disputes the right of any Government to act in the defence of perceived threats to its people, and Israel has the right to protect its citizens. And there can be no denying the damage and loss of life Israel has endured during the history of this conflict. Nevertheless, it is difficult for reasonable people not to be appalled at the disproportionate action of Israel. The one shell on the United Nations compound killed more Lebanese than the number of casualties Israel has suffered since this conflict began in 1982. That, by any reasonable measure, is excessive, particularly as there have been no reported Israeli deaths in these latest Hezbollah provocations. One must also not forget that the Qana victims were not even those in conflict with Israel, but innocent civilians known to be under United Nations protection.

Israel's actions also contravene the tenets of the 1993 accord by which Israel and Hezbollah agreed not to target civilians in their respective areas. Too many creditable reports suggest that the first violations against non-combatants are to be attributed to a frustrated Israel, unable effectively to silence Hezbollah at a critical time.

That Israel has persisted in this outrage not against its immediate adversaries but against the civilians of Lebanon, despite universal condemnation, is instructive. While many have laboured long for genuine peace, trade and goodwill in the Middle East, often making difficult and substantial adjustments in historical policies, this latest round of events appears to indicate that Israel is still on the old world adversarial footing, unwilling to go as far as the Arabs in genuinely seeking peace. Each so-called concession is overloaded with conditions limiting its scope or with time constraints, delaying for years its effective implementation.

The time has come for Israel to recognize that it must withdraw from its occupation of nearly 10 per cent of the State of Lebanon. As we understand it, this is virtually the only substantial claim of Hezbollah, and it is justifiable. It is called for in Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which Israel has ignored. Everywhere we come up against the same issue — Israel's occupation of Arab land and its reluctance, if not its refusal, to return it. The all too predictable outcome is that of a recurring pattern of hostilities, despite what has been a remarkable Arab effort from many quarters for peace and good relations. Everywhere the issue of land and peace confronts us, and shows few signs of going away. This is the core problem — the cause of the region's persistent insecurity — and it will have to be addressed, not only by Israel but by the Arabs as well. Lasting peace needs more than temporary and tentative deals.

The presence in the Middle East of the French Foreign Minister, the American Secretary of State and envoys of the European Union confirms the gravity of this latest upsurge in violence and the urgency of the need to address the underlying causes of insecurity in the region.

The draft resolution before the Assembly describes and reflects the real nature of events in Lebanon: the violation of the Geneva Convention of 1949 on the protection of civilians, the refusal to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978), the high number of civilian casualties, the relentless bombardments, and the need to recognize the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon. It is a fair draft resolution, reflecting the world's indignation and the need for Israel to respect all of Lebanon if there is to be peace.

The tragedy is that Lebanon is not Israel's perceived enemy, and has done nothing to deserve the brutal force being used against it. This is totally unacceptable. This human tragedy cannot continue.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The General Assembly is meeting today to consider the comprehensive aggression launched by Israel against Lebanon, and its dire consequences. This meeting is taking place after the Security Council failed to put an end to aggression and punish the aggressor in accordance with its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. This has enabled Israel to continue its aggression. Lebanon's decision, supported by the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to resort to this forum, which represents all the peoples of the world and the world's living conscience, is a further attempt to have the whole world face up to its responsibilities to defend international peace and security. It is an attempt to put an end to Israel's continued aggression and defiance of the norms of international law, international legitimacy, the United Nations Charter and the noble values agreed upon by all the peoples of the world represented in this international Organization.

The destruction, massacres and immeasurable suffering in Lebanon reported by the mass media, which show human bodies that have been cut up and mutilated, is unequivocal proof of the barbaric nature of the aggression taking place at the hands of the Israelis. Israel began the aggression against Lebanon by launching a heinous war, leaving behind terrible devastation in villages and towns, and transforming most parts of Lebanon into a hell. Israel has destroyed the economic and social infrastructure of more than one third of Lebanon. Its aeroplanes have attacked hundreds of thousands of civilians, who have had to leave their villages and towns. Israel has engaged in a campaign aimed at utter starvation, and has used its gunboats to shell relief and supply convoys carrying medical equipment to displaced persons. Its bombardment has even reached the coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme. Israel, through its shelling, its arms, its destruction and its collective punishment, has tried to undermine the sovereignty of a founding Member of the United Nations on the pretext of security — a security gained at the expense of Arab dignity, territorial integrity and security.

Security has been Israel's pretext for launching all of its aggressive wars. Israel well knows that real security cannot be achieved through occupation, displacement and bombardment by tanks, artillery, gunboats and aeroplanes. Israel must understand that its peace and security cannot be achieved by bombarding an ambulance carrying children burnt by its heinous shells.

No friend of a peace based on international legitimacy and United Nations resolutions could convince himself that this terrible aggression against Lebanon is for the sake of peace, security or stability. Israel is carrying out a misleading campaign in some areas of the international mass media. Those who want peace cannot kill innocent civilians; those who want peace cannot occupy land and displace its inhabitants; those who want peace cannot bombard the peace-keeping operations centre. Israel, which has displaced millions of Arabs and has been committing terrorist acts, is the last country to accuse others of being terrorists.

The Israeli occupation of Arab lands is the ultimate incarnation of terror and its main cause in our region. This fact cannot be changed by calling for conferences in an attempt to alter the facts, mislead world public opinion or try to justify Israel's current State terror against Lebanon.

Israel refers to its aggression against Arab countries as "fighting terrorism" and "self-defence". But at the same time it describes acts of self-defence by the Arabs as merely "terrorism". The Syrian Arab Republic condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and considers it a criminal act. But it believes that peoples under occupation have the right to resist. This is a right guaranteed by all international instruments and by the United Nations. It is a sacred part of our legal heritage. It imposes an obligation on all countries, and on the international family of the United Nations, to stand against those who try to sacrifice international security norms in order to achieve their own special peace and security. That is why killing civilians and destroying houses constitute the real terror.

Lebanon accepted the peace process, which was started at the Madrid conference, in an attempt to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the region based on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 338 (1973) and 242 (1967) and on the principle of land for peace. Lebanon has cooperated with all the efforts of the two countries that are guardians of the peace process in this respect, but these efforts have met with Israel's intransigence and continued defiance of international legitimacy.

Peace is a great objective, and in the Middle East it is more than necessary. But, regrettably, Israel does not understand its comprehensive and just meaning. For Israel, peace means the achievement of strategic objectives based on the imposition of Israeli peace. Israeli peace is based on obfuscating the clear fact that it is still continuing to occupy other people's countries. Those who follow events in our region believe that Israel's objectives are unacceptable, and we cannot be silent about them. The international community must speak up. It is called upon to take a decisive and determined position, and to impose the relevant resolution to prevent any attempts to circumvent the legitimate international resolutions.

At their emergency meeting in Cairo, Ministers of the Arab countries adopted a resolution condemning Israeli aggression against Lebanon. It called for an end to the aggression, the process of destruction and the forced displacement of people. It called upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities for containing the aggression and forcing Israel to implement the Council's resolution 425 (1978).

Today we declare from this rostrum that we stand by the side of Lebanon in its crisis. I confirm our support for all the comments made here by His Excellency the President of Lebanon, and for his requests. Syria has

been cooperating genuinely with all the efforts to end the suffering of the Lebanese people. We are hopeful that this international Organization will shoulder its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security by condemning this aggression against Lebanon and forcing Israel to withdraw immediately from all Lebanese territories, in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

Lebanon should also be compensated for the damage that it has suffered. In this way we can maintain the credibility of this Organization, which the peoples of the world consider a haven for the maintenance of security, sovereignty and political independence. In this way this Organization cannot be accused of following double standards which in themselves threaten international peace and security.

Mr. Abu-Nimah (Jordan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): May I at the outset express my delegation's thanks to you, Mr. President, for having rapidly agreed to this resumed session of the General Assembly to consider the situation of our brother country, Lebanon. We hope, as President Hraoui said yesterday, that the results will be commensurate with the aspirations of the international community to see justice done and restore the confidence of the peoples of the Middle East in the peace process, which has been threatened by the escalation of violence and continued, disproportionate Israeli attacks under the pretext of security concerns.

The Arab States and Lebanon addressed the Security Council at the beginning of the crisis, as the Security Council is the forum entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security under the Charter. The Charter also indicates the means by which the Council can attain that objective. The Council, however, has been unable to have its cease-fire resolution implemented or to halt the destruction. The international community is still witnessing an escalation in Israel's military raids. Land, air and sea raids are causing considerable loss of life and property, as well as the destruction of towns and villages, and hundreds of thousands of people have had to flee their homes in a mass exodus. This violates the dignity and sovereignty of Lebanon.

This situation is intolerable. It is exemplified in Israel's massacre at Qana of civilians, including the elderly, women and children. This tragedy, an affront to the human conscience and one of the worst war atrocities perpetrated against innocent civilians, took place following the bombing of ambulances, the destruction of homes and the murder of entire families.

We deplore and condemn this brutal violence and these attacks on innocent civilians. We condemn the siege of these cities, the destruction of infrastructure and the cutting-off of water, electricity, food supplies and vital necessities. We condemn these acts, just as we condemn violence and all attacks against innocent civilians wherever they are committed.

My country, Jordan, was among the first in the region to call for ongoing efforts to establish peace in our region, which has suffered too long the consequences of war, and we have continued to do so over the years. In spite of our commitment to peace, we have had no success. Alongside our brothers and sisters, we have participated in the peace process begun in Madrid. First, Egypt concluded a peace agreement with Israel; then the Palestine Liberation Organization signed its agreements; and, in October 1994, Jordan was the third party to sign a peace treaty with Israel. This, we felt, was to be the first step on the path to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace to culminate in an agreement on Palestine and Lebanon, accepted by the respective populations, to ensure the viability and permanence of the accords.

We continue to believe that peace must be comprehensive and just, and accompanied by Israel's total withdrawal from all the Arab occupied territories. That is why we are making sincere efforts to fulfil our commitments and to implement the letter and the spirit of the provisions of the Treaty. We believe that peace is a necessity for all the peoples of the region and the foundation without which there can be no stability or economic development. In so doing, we wish to assert that the use of military force serves neither this noble objective nor those of peace-loving peoples, nor can it lay the foundations for peace and security. This use of force runs counter to the principles of the United Nations Charter, the Organization's resolutions and civilized behaviour.

My country's commitment to peace requires our devotion to its principles and to the prevalence of justice and legitimacy. We must also fight against any hindrance of, threat to or delay of the process. That is why we call on Israel to renounce its policy of brute force and to commit itself, together with all the States of the region, to dialogue and negotiation as the means of resolving conflicts and of arriving at a just and lasting peace.

Today's events in Lebanon and the situation of the populations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which represent violations of the most basic legal principles, create instability and chaos in the region that can only leave lasting wounds in the populations and shake their confidence in the credibility of the peace process and of Israel's commitment. They also deepen the feelings of frustration and threaten the climate necessary in the Middle East for ensuring mutual respect for rights and cooperation between the States of the region. Israel's military attack on Lebanon, now in its fourteenth day, does not promote that atmosphere necessary to the peace process.

Four years after the peace process was initiated, the international community must not allow a return to the logic of war and destruction or the use of violence in the service of any objectives. We had hoped that such methods were things of the past. We believe that any delay in restoring a just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy and on negotiated political settlements can only encourage violence, extremism, instability and insecurity. Palliatives and provisional measures do not achieve the desired results. We must address the very roots of the problem: Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, which is at the very heart of the problem there. Hence, the continuation of that occupation and disdain for United Nations resolutions will not bring peace, security or stability to the region.

The only guarantee that a climate of security and stability will be established between Israel and Lebanon, and that peace and cooperation will prevail, resides in implementation of resolution 425 (1978), which demands Israel's full withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The end of occupation is the only assurance that violence will end and that progress will be achieved towards peace through negotiations. But violence and counter-violence can lead only to bitterness and return the entire region to a climate of confrontation, with disastrous consequences.

We in Jordan feel the pain of our brothers and sisters in Lebanon. We support Lebanon in its tribulations. We ask the General Assembly to condemn these violations, violence and use of force and to make every effort to help Lebanon endure the consequences of this situation, assist its institutions and people and protect their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. In our region, progress towards the peace to which we all aspire, and which we consider to be the only viable path to development, can be made only through dialogue, the easing of tensions and the cessation of all acts of reprisal, such as the brutal acts we are currently seeing. History has taught us that these methods only deepen the wounds and can only be counterproductive.

Lebanon's need to address the General Assembly, with the support of the Arab Group, resulted from the Security Council's failure to put an end to the violence. We hope that this resumed session will achieve the desired results, that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution now before it and ensure its implementation.

Mr. Al-Khussaiby (Oman): We are very grateful to you, Sir, for having convened these important special meetings. There is no doubt that, under your skilful leadership, the Assembly will successfully address the vital issue of halting the ongoing aggression, led by Israel against Lebanon and its fraternal people, in order to maintain the momentum of the peace process in the Middle East and enhance international peace and security, for the benefit of all mankind.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the President of the fraternal State of Lebanon, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, and to pay him a special tribute for managing to be present here at this resumed session, in spite of all the difficulties, to brief us on the sufferings that the innocent Lebanese people have been enduring during the random shelling of Lebanon by the Israeli forces.

Over the past few years, the international community has witnessed significant progress in the course of the negotiations of the peace process in the Middle East, especially on the Palestinian-Israeli and Jordanian-Israeli tracks. Through its participation in the Madrid conference peace talks and during the multilateral negotiations which followed the Conference, my country, the Sultanate of Oman, has vigorously called for the enhancing of the peace process in the Middle East. Furthermore, on many similar occasions, my country has repeatedly emphasized its principled and firm position calling for similar progress on the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks in a manner conducive to a permanent and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions: 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

To reaffirm and consolidate this position, my country opened channels of negotiation with Israel stemming from its belief that such measures would improve and encourage the ongoing peace process in the Middle East for the prosperity of the people of that area.

Therefore, in our view, the relentless and continuous shelling by Israel of the towns, villages, coasts and seaports of Lebanon, in addition to the killing and displacing of civilian populations — among which are the elderly, women and children — not only constitute a flagrant violation of the security, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon, but also pose a serious threat to the peace efforts made so far to establish the principles of the peace process in the area.

The Israelis' recent aggression against Lebanon runs counter to the goals and objectives of the peace process in the Middle East. Therefore, my country calls upon all parties involved in this conflict to put the objective of achieving peace in the area above any personal and temporary benefits in order to avoid the recurrence of bloodshed and any further conflicts in the Middle East.

Based on all this, my delegation calls upon Israel to immediately halt its military attacks against Lebanon and pave the way for international diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful settlement of this conflict. We therefore call on the General Assembly at this resumed session to take an explicit and clear decision, with the adoption of a resolution calling upon Israel to stop its military actions and withdraw its forces beyond the internationally recognized borders agreed upon in accordance with the Security Council's resolutions and, in particular, resolution 425 (1978). On the same basis, we appeal to the international community to expedite its efforts to extend humanitarian emergency assistance in order to alleviate the sufferings of the fraternal people of Lebanon and to provide them with their basic needs.

In conclusion, while looking forward to the achievement of a genuine, permanent and peaceful settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict, my Government is hopeful that the international community will take a firm stand against the Israeli military aggression in the area. Likewise, my Government is confident that the co-sponsors of the peace process in the Middle East will exert pressure on Israel to fulfil its obligations undertaken in the relevant peace agreement and reactivate the peace agreement on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks through the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

Mr. Biørn Lian (Norway): Allow me first of all to salute the presence in the General Assembly Hall yesterday of the President of the Lebanese Republic. We listened with the greatest attention to his statement, and we attach the utmost importance to the testimony he gave on behalf of his war-torn and troubled country. I would like to present our condolences to him and to his people for the tragic loss of civilian lives and the human suffering due to the current hostilities.

The presence in the General Assembly Hall of the President of Lebanon underscores the highly important role played by the United Nations in the Middle East and in the attempts to achieve, preserve and uphold peace in this region. Norway is currently the largest contributor of troops to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). We therefore follow the situation with particular attention and concern, and we strongly regret that United Nations personnel are put at risk through actions we have witnessed during the hostilities.

Hezbollah's attacks from Lebanese villages and close to United Nations positions are totally unacceptable. And we strongly deplore the Israeli shelling of the UNIFIL position in Qana which resulted in more than a hundred Lebanese refugees losing their lives and in casualties suffered by UNIFIL personnel. We regret that the Israeli actions are out of proportion to the attacks by Hezbollah against targets in Israel. The Norwegian Government once again urges both Hezbollah and Israel to immediately cease all violent actions in the area, and in this context expresses its full support for Security Council resolution 1052 (1996).

We fully support the ongoing diplomatic efforts to put an immediate stop to the violence. We hope that the parties will be able to find a lasting solution to the conflict between Israel and Lebanon as part of a comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict, guaranteeing Israel's security and preserving Lebanon's sovereignty, in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

The peace process in the Middle East is now in a critical phase due to the acts of terror in Israel and the violence in southern Lebanon. Violence must be stopped if the peace process is to get back on track. We remain convinced that there is no alternative to the ongoing peace process. We must not forget the considerable progress already made, nor that the negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization have already been fruitful despite problems and delays. This peace process, therefore, deserves our continuous and full support.

The economic and social problems in the Palestinian areas due to the border closure are of great concern to us. At the informal meeting in Brussels on 12 April of

the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee which coordinates assistance to the Palestinian areas and which Norway has the honour to chair, we discussed the serious economic crisis in the West Bank and Gaza, and an emergency assistance programme was presented.

The Israeli decision to redeploy in Hebron, as agreed in the Oslo II Agreement, is a positive signal for the future of the peace process. This is true even though it should have taken place in March. Another positive signal is the decision of Israel and the PLO to commence the final-status negotiations as scheduled in May this year. We indeed hope that the situation will be stabilized so that the parties can carry on with negotiations, both between Israel and the PLO and between Israel and Syria.

Many unresolved problems remain between Israel and Syria. However, the two countries have both shown a will to move towards peace. We hope that the present phase of violence will come to an end so that the countries in the region can continue their efforts towards a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Owada (Japan): I should like to preface my statement by welcoming His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of the Lebanese Republic, whose very presence here underscores the gravity of the situation in his country. On behalf of the people and Government of Japan, I should like to ask him to convey my sincere condolences to all those who have suffered in the hostilities through the loss of loved ones and the destruction of their homes.

The hostilities in Lebanon appear to be continuing unabated; each day brings shocking reports of renewed violence and additional casualties. Last week, on 18 April, the Security Council met in emergency session to respond specifically to the deplorable incident in which the shelling of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) position in southern Lebanon claimed scores of lives, including those of UNIFIL personnel. In that forum, Japan, together with other Members of the Organization, strongly urged all parties concerned to exercise the utmost restraint and to cease fighting. As an expression of the common will of the international community, the Council adopted resolution 1052 (1996), calling for the immediate cessation of hostilities. It is most regrettable that, despite this, there is so far no sign that the parties concerned are complying with the resolution. The Government of Japan once again expresses its sincere sympathy to the families of the victims of the hostilities.

There is a very real danger that this seemingly unrestrained spiral of violence could threaten the Middle East peace process itself. It is essential to achieve a lasting, political solution to the present crisis so that the regional peace process may be resumed. On its part, my Government, through a high-level diplomatic channel, has urged each of the parties directly concerned to cease hostilities. It has also requested other countries concerned to use their influence to achieve that end. Japan sincerely appreciates the diplomatic initiatives of the international community, particularly those of the United States, France and Russia, together with those of other countries in the region, and is ready to extend its full support and cooperation to those efforts. It is Japan's earnest hope that the diplomatic efforts will be successful and lead to an improved political environment which will enable us to realize a full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978). But it bears repeating that no progress will be made until the parties concerned cease their hostilities.

As for my country, Japan is determined to contribute, to the best of its ability, to the restoration of peace in Lebanon. My Government will also extend humanitarian relief — including emergency grant assistance — to help ease the suffering of the Lebanese people.

I should like to conclude my statement today by reaffirming the commitment of the Government of Japan to remain actively involved in international efforts to support and facilitate the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Misić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): My Government joins in the chorus of countries calling for an immediate cessation of all military hostilities in Lebanon. We must condemn in the strongest terms all attacks against civilians, and particularly the horrendous attack against the United Nations base, which killed scores of innocents, as well as those attacks that have killed Lebanese civilians in their homes throughout Lebanon. We also strongly condemn the continuing violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We, as victims of terror, condemn at the same time all the terrorist acts against civilians that we have been witnessing for decades in that part of the world.

Nothing can justify the killing of children, men and women. No one can reach any decent and noble goal through killing. Everyone in this vicious circle of violence is always a loser. But we particularly condemn any and all acts of a military nature that are designed to

indiscriminately kill, maim or injure civilians. As victims of "ethnic cleansing" and genocide, we deplore all mass-population movements caused by military attack or by the threat of such attack. The undertaking of acts that lead to the imposition of conditions which create hardship for masses of civilians and which are in effect a form of collective punishment must also be denounced as contrary to international humanitarian law.

The horrendous results of the shelling of the United Nations compound make us wonder about the intent of Israeli policies, but it is clear that they have targeted Lebanese civilian infrastructure and people. Even if this particular shelling of the United Nations base was the result of an accident, as we would like to believe, it shows at least an inadequate regard for innocent human life. Therefore, though the intent to kill innocent civilians may be missing, a reckless disregard for civilian lives as well as for United Nations authority has been shown.

We must make this point for the future. We would like to see a solution to this tragedy based on the clear sovereignty of Lebanon; full respect for civilians lives; support for the efforts of the United Nations forces on the ground, especially as they relate to the humanitarian mission; an immediate end to the fighting; and a full commitment to the peace process, involving the Palestinians and all Israel's neighbours.

Finally, we hope to see an initiative which will create the conditions for a full resumption of the process leading to a comprehensive peace in the region. Clearly, the rights of all the peoples of the region to live without fear must be the cornerstone of such a peace, but as the United Nations strives to achieve such a goal we cannot ignore the tenets of international law and the principles for which the United Nations stands.

The people of the region deserve not only peace, but peace through justice, and it is the obligation of the United Nations to bring about these conditions for all the peoples of the region.

Mr. Londoño Paredes (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The whole world learned with horror of the action of the Israeli military forces that caused the massacre of innocent men, women and children who were refugees in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) compound in Qana, where UNIFIL personnel from the Republic of Fiji also perished.

This is another chapter in the bloody confrontation going on in the Middle East, an additional bombshell harming efforts to obtain a just and lasting peace in the region. The death of defenceless civilians, whatever the pretext and whatever the circumstances cannot be justified or excused, and it deserves our deepest condemnation. Mistakes cannot be overlooked simply because they are mistakes and, therefore, must entail moral, political and financial responsibilities. The magnitude and seriousness of certain actions cannot depend on the nationality of the dead.

We are profoundly concerned over the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East. We urge that Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity be respected, and we condemn the Israeli occupation of the southern part of its territory. We reaffirm the need for the prompt and unconditional implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), as an indispensable precondition for peace and security in the region, as well as for the release of all the Lebanese citizens detained in Israeli camps.

Colombia calls for the cessation of hostilities and for resolution of the conflict by the peaceful means for the settlement of disputes envisaged in the Charter. We also call for respect for the sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized borders. We reject violence and terrorism, whatever their origin, and call upon the parties involved in the grave situation that the region is suffering to persist in their efforts to consolidate peace, with full respect for the norms of international humanitarian law, since in this framework respect for human rights cannot be in one direction alone.

Mr. Razali (Malaysia): By convening this resumed session, the General Assembly has asserted its responsibility as enshrined in the Charter, especially given the inability of the Security Council to address what is clearly a development which threatens international peace and security.

Yesterday, the Lebanese President in his statement beseeched us that the usurped rights of Lebanon be restored. He embodied the indomitable spirit of Lebanon when he insisted that Lebanon shall not die. At this moment, when Lebanon pleads for survival, the international community represented at this Assembly must stand on the side of the aggrieved and ensure the survival of sovereign nations, even if the Security

Council is unable to play any role, given the refusal of certain Powers to rise above allegiance to Israel.

In the last 14 days Israel has continuously bombarded Lebanon, with no sign of let-up, irrespective of the mounting civilian casualties and the destruction of the Lebanese infrastructure. As the Lebanese President stated, his country is being made a victim of other peoples' war. Yet, while seemingly frantic diplomacy goes from pillar to post, the United Nations is not allowed to play a role and no condemnation of Israel is allowed in the Council. Security Council resolution 1052 (1996), adopted on 18 April 1996, one week after Israel started its military actions, was a feeble whimper, calling for a cease-fire, with no condemnation of Israel's actions.

Many of us had expected that, given the grave situation in Lebanon, the Council would call for Israel to cease its attacks on Lebanon and its people and to withdraw from southern Lebanon, in conformity with the letter and spirit of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which that same body adopted 18 years ago. But, to our dismay, the politics and power play of Powers close to Israel hampered the aspiration of the majority to see the conflict brought to an end and to allow justice and the rule of law to prevail.

The Malaysian delegation does not accept the contention that all aspects of the Middle East conflict, including Lebanon, are not within the purview of the United Nations. This sidelines the United Nations, discredits it further and allows power imperatives of certain countries to hold sway on the issue.

It is left to the General Assembly to comprehensively address this issue at this critical moment. The international community is duty-bound to guarantee the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. We believe the United Nations, through this Assembly, can play a more important role, particularly in articulating in unambiguous terms our solidarity with and support for Lebanon.

Lebanon has just entered its post-civil-war recovery period. After two decades of instability, the Lebanese Government has been rebuilding its infrastructure in order to provide a better living for its people and to restore the country to its rightful status in the international community. Peace and stability have always been aspirations of the Lebanese people. It would certainly be unfair and unjustified for the international community to ignore those aspirations. The support of the international community is therefore needed more than ever to restore peace and stability to Lebanon. Israeli acts of aggression must come to an immediate end.

The prospects for peace in the region following the Madrid conference four years ago were unprecedented, breaking established mind-sets and setting in place a building block for peace and security. Unfortunately, the latest developments that the world is witnessing in Lebanon are a grim throwback to conditions we once thought to have been overcome.

The international community cannot ignore the dangers facing the Middle East as a result of actions continuing in Lebanon. The root cause of the problem is Israel's continued occupation of southern Lebanon. It is inadmissible that the international community should allow the continued infringement of the territorial integrity of Lebanon and the violation of its sovereignty, which threaten the very statehood and survival of that country. The Lebanese President stated yesterday that Lebanon will readily guarantee the security of all its areas if Israel withdraws from southern Lebanon. A Lebanese Government, unthreatened by Israel and with southern Lebanon free of Israeli occupation, can deal with all the complex strands of the Middle East conflict, including Israeli security. But there must be withdrawal.

The issue of Israel's security is recognized and upheld. This will be made possible within the context of a comprehensive and durable agreement. All parties must be brought to negotiation. Nothing can be achieved through violence and intimidation, but a great deal can be lost if this type of action continues. Israel cannot bludgeon out of existence all that it sees as its enemies, since its actual occupation of southern Lebanon provides the reason for actions against Israel. As Malaysia has stated before, Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon not only violates the sovereignty of Lebanon but is militarily indefensible. By being there, Israel becomes exposed and vulnerable to all parties that oppose Israeli occupation.

The use of military force will not ensure peace and security for Israel. There will not even be any short-term benefit. No security equation or presence in southern Lebanon has been changed by its inflicting hardships on the Lebanese people. At this moment, anger and hatred are again emerging in the region. The Israeli leadership is losing international credibility after so much sacrifice and so many brave efforts earlier.

Malaysia has consistently voiced its support for a comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict that

would bring peace to all countries in the region in line with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978). Malaysia would like to reaffirm our total commitment to peace and security in Lebanon and an end to the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. The way to protect Israeli security is through a political compact with neighbours, and the integrity of Lebanon must be part of that compact. At this critical juncture, in which the situation is delicate and fragile, every effort must be made to consolidate the peace process.

In conclusion, let me join preceding speakers in expressing our full support for the draft resolution which Lebanon hopes this Assembly will adopt at the end of the debate. The elements of the draft resolution are consistent with the call made by the Lebanese President yesterday to condemn Israeli attacks; for an immediate cease-fire; to assist in meeting the humanitarian needs of Lebanon; and for the full and immediate implementation of resolution 425 (1978). This Assembly must do what the Security Council was not able to do: manifest courage and a sense of fair play and justice for Lebanon and all its people.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mexico is participating in this resumed session of the General Assembly aware that in this case, as in many others, the Security Council has not been able to find formulas to prevent further bloodshed, produce an immediate cessation of hostilities or establish security measures to guarantee the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon as soon as possible and the security of all the countries of the region, including Israel.

Once again, the Middle East has fallen prey to violence. In recent days, military positions and civilian settlements have been bombed and attacked. Even the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon has been a victim of this new escalation.

My Government profoundly deplores the loss of lives, particularly those of innocent civilians, and we regret the damage to property. We are deeply saddened by these acts of force against Lebanon, a country with which Mexico has excellent relations and which for many years has had to endure all manner of attack, violation and interference. Like all States of the region, Lebanon, a State Member of the United Nations, deserves to live in peace within secure boundaries. Its population has the right to enjoy a dignified existence, free from the threat or use of force. The Lebanese people has the inalienable right to the full exercise of its sovereignty and independence.

As I have said, the basis for a just and lasting solution to the question of the Middle East is respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the countries of the region. In the case of Lebanon, this includes strict compliance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Recent events reaffirm our conviction that the question of Lebanon must be an integral part of the peace process in the Middle East. In this context, we are concerned that in its resolution 1052 (1996) the Security Council did not explicitly reaffirm the provisions of resolution 425 (1978).

Mexico understands that the Security Council must on occasion act prudently in fulfilling its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. This does not mean, however, a reduction in its duty to proceed with the utmost objectivity to consider any matter brought to its attention. We expected a firmer stand from the Security Council with respect to the use of force, the loss of human life and the suffering of the civilian population.

Through me, the Government of Mexico appeals for an end to the violence in Lebanon. It urges the parties to the conflict to resolve their differences through negotiation, without the use of force. In reiterating its firm support for the peace process in the Middle East, my Government reaffirms its conviction that violence does not resolve conflicts — it only exacerbates them. We trust that all those concerned will soon take the path of reason and dialogue and thus lay the foundations for a firm, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.